



Scrutinizing the Moral Standard and Ethical Implications of Students' Involvement in the Examination Malpractice in Lagos State

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ABSTRACT

Examination malpractices have been identified with such names as: the monster, national disease, national disgrace, a cancer in educational underbelly etc. in the Nigeria context. Educational malpractices which began as isolated cases of examination leakage and other malpractices in all institutions across the country, have turned out into an avalanche. Thus calling to question, the credibility of admission and assessments based on examinations held within the country. The effect of examination malpractice to the growth and development of our educational has become an eye sore. The tree of examination malpractices has over the years grown gigantic satanic roots spreading its tentacles to even the most revered of Nigeria's institutions and examination bodies. The problem is not just associated with the lower examination bodies like WAEC, JAMB, NECO etc. it is also not a stranger to the higher institutions and other professional examinations such as the medical examinations, the Law school examinations. The most striking issue is that students who are adherents of various beliefs and faiths for example, fanatics who belong to Muslim or Christian religions are often times found to be victims of this moral misconduct. A research survey method was carried out to collect data population, assessment of questions and the opinions of students of the eight (8) faculties within the University of Lagos, Akoka the Mainland Government Area of Lagos State to be able to assess the level of examination malpractices. A total of 400 students were randomly selected from each of the eight faculties of the University to form the bulk of the population or respondents. The subject pool included both male and female, Muslim and Christians students. Both questionnaire and interview were used as research survey method to collect data for assessment of the opinions of the students

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INTRODUCTION

Examination malpractices have been identified with such names as: the monster, national disease, national disgrace, a cancer in educational underbelly. etc. Educational malpractices which began as isolated cases of examination leakage and other malpractices in all institutions across the country, have turned out into an avalanche, thus calling to

question, the credibility of admission and assessments based on examinations held within the country (Obe 1992).

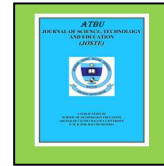
It is painful to hear that there is increase in examination malpractice by students from different parts of the world. Examination malpractice is the illegal action that students take during their examinations in struggle to make good grades through cut-corners. It can also be defined as

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cheating by students in their examination halls. The question is: what are the causes of these malpractices among the students? Do they indulge in such act because they like doing it? What makes students to indulge in examination malpractices as if they cannot do without it?

The problems of examination malpractice to the growth and development of our educational sector are enormous. The tree of examination malpractices has over the years grown gigantic satanic roots spreading its tentacles to even the most revered of Nigeria's institutions and examination bodies. The problem is not just associated with the lower examination bodies like (WAEC, JAMB, NECO) etc., it is no stranger to the higher institutions and other professional examinations such as the medical examinations, the Law school examinations etc. The most striking issue is that students who are adherents of various beliefs and faiths for example, religious fanatics who belong to Muslim or Christian religions are often times found to be victims of this moral misconduct.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Religiosity

Religiosity means being religious. It is a degree of involvement and the commitment to a religious life. It is the intensity of the involvement and commitment to religious theory and practice. Religion is conceived and defined differently by different people. It is noteworthy that in spite of the long history of religion or the study of religion in general, it is very difficult to produce a satisfactory description, definition, let alone the actual definition of religiosity. Nevertheless, individual religiosity can be measured through some indices like – church membership, frequency of church attendance, saying of private prayers, attitudes toward religion, specific beliefs, religious experience, professional employment, and contribution to church funds, publication of articles about religion, religious affiliation and religious rituals.

According to Gedriatis, religion is a normative institution which has several forms each of which has social implications. Thus a

religious person offers services to god in obedience as a responsible and accountable human being in a particular social situation. In this context, it is impossible to seal religion and social life into mutually airtight categories. Omoregbe says religion means different things to different people. In this context religion means different things to the theologians, sociologists, psychologists, philosopher, freethinker, teachers, and students who are stakeholders in such issues like examination malpractices. On the other hand, the Christians who have either escaped or avoided the subjective trap live and walk according to a faith that is anything but thin. It is based in a living faith that is fed by communing with the Triune God on a daily basis. It is not based on a contextualized subjective religiosity, but is based on walking by faith, not by sight. These people believe God and walk accordingly. They are not perfect. They still sin. They still find themselves having to repent and walk in repentance, but they look forward to the day when they will be with their Lord forever. This life is not the end of all things, but the life to come is the focus (see the passage I placed at the top of this post).

In Christianity, stealing can take many forms, including cheating someone or even delaying paying someone what you owe him or her: "You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another. ... You shall not cheat your neighbor nor rob him. The wages of him who is hired shall not remain with you all night until morning" (Leviticus 19:11, 13).

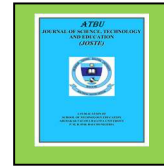
The apostle James strongly warned the wealthy people who oppressed their workers and the poor: "Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days. Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter" (James 5:2-5).

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Companies can attempt to steal from people with misleading advertising and shoddy products and services. Employees can steal from their employers by wasting time or doing personal things on company time.

Lazy people can try to take advantage of the goodness of others, leading the apostle Paul to write: "For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread" (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12).

Biblically, a Christian must put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. (Colossians 3:5-8 ESV)

Here we see our responsibility in this walk. We are to walk before our Lord in this narrow path in such a way that we put to death what is earthly in us that leads to idolatry. Why? These are the very things that were the cause of God's wrath being poured out on our Saviour on the Cross and will be the cause of the wrath to come. Yes, it is coming. We must not love this lost and dying world. We are to put these things away and not live this way.

Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which

binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Colossians 3:9-17 ESV)

Is this natural? No it is not. We are being called to walk in obedience in a way that is not natural. It requires us to trust our Lord to both enable us to do this and to change us as He does it. He will also work in those around us who observe this and do a good work in them as well. This is being Christlike in the midst of a sinful world. We cannot do this on our own. It requires a spirit-filled, objective faith. We are to put on love and God will give us peace and joy and build our faith so we can do it. We may even be persecuted in the midst of doing this, but we will sing psalms and praise the Lord even in the midst of that. We will thank the Lord and praise Him in the midst of it all.

Now, the subjective religionist may try to emulate this, but their "feelings" can only keep this up for a little while and they will eventually give in to their emotions and fail. However, the Objective Christian walking by faith can do all things through Christ who strengthens them no matter the pressure from the world or the enemy. He or she can be content in a world that demands that they be fleshly.

Also in Islam, Consciousness of God influences the attitude of man not only strives to apply His commandments to his daily routine, but tries to satisfy Him in all his endeavors. A muslim, therefore, abhors devilish activities which are likely to stand between him and his creator. As he is making frantic effort to fulfill his religious obligation, he eventually learns to obey the rules of the authority, as taught by God Himself (Q4.59), which makes examination malpractices, a punishable offence.

The important lesson drawn from the belief in judgement day is the issue of

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accountability (Q. 2:281, 2:123). A muslim believes that since he was not consulted before he was sent on earth, he would not be informed when to return to his lord. His life on earth is not accidental, therefore, he would be called upon to give full account of his stewardship while on earth. The Prophet Muhammed said “All of you are shepherds, and all of you will be questioned on how you have reared your sheep”. In essence, no action of man can escape the record of God, because He has appointed two angels to record every activity of man, no matter how minute it may be and the records would be shown to him on the judgement day. The remembrance of the above is strong enough to curb him from any activity that may spell doom for him on the day.

As a way of motivation, Allah has laid down the concept of reinforcement, i.e. a mechanism put in place to reward every good action and punish every evil, perpetrated by man. The Glorious Qur’an constantly reminds the true believers, who performs all the duties ordained by God and His Apostle, and abstains from all

kinds of evil deeds prohibited in Islam, e.g. examination malpractices, of abundant reward (Qur’an 18:107, 55: 4560), while those who breaks

The Examination Malpractice act (1999) explains exam malpractice as any act of omission or commission by a person who in anticipation of, before or after any exam, fraudulently secure any unfair advantage for himself or any other person in such a manner that contravenes the rules and regulations to the extent of undermining the validity, reliability and authenticity of the certificates issued.

The process of examination has become a contemporary shame (Nwadiani, 2005) and this is caused by the phenomena of examination malpractices that has become endemic in the educational system. In 2006, the federal ministry of education black-listed and de-recognized 324 secondary schools across the nation as centres for conduction public examinations from 2007 to 2010. The distribution of the schools involved and found guilty is shown in the table below:

Zone	Number of Schools	Percentage
North Central	54	16.6
North-East	08	2.5
South-East	48	14.8
South-South	116	36.0
South-West	86	26.5
North-West	12	3.6
Total	324	100

{Source: Jimoh, 2009; Omemu, 2015}.

The main causes of examination malpractice in Nigeria can be traced to emphasis on certificates and desire of students to pass at all cost.

METHODOLOGY

A research survey method was carried out to collect data population, assessment of questions and the opinions of both students and staff of the eight faculties of University of Lagos, Akoka campus to be able to assess the level of examination malpractices. Eight (8) faculties within the University were involved. A total of 600

students were randomly selected from each of the twelve faculties of the University to form the bulk of the population or respondents. The subject pool included both male and female Muslim and Christian students. The principal instrument for data collection for this study was the Likert questionnaire. The essence of this questionnaire was to find out as well as to gather enough information on the relationship between students' level of religiosity and their involvement in examination malpractices. Two types of questionnaire for students which contained eighteen (18) items and the staff

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questionnaire sought to find out the respondents opinions about students' involvement in examination malpractices and their level of religiosity. Another instrument used was documentation. Data was collected on the list of students' who were caught in examination malpractices, tried by the school authorities and were punished as well. This was collected from the department.

To analyze the stated hypotheses, the t - test statistical method was used. To find out whether the level of religiosity of students affect their involvement in examination malpractices in University of Lagos, a set of students and staff questionnaires were administered to some randomly selected students and staff from the eight faculties of University of Lagos. The responses obtained were classified as tables and were analyzed sequentially. The questions or items in the questionnaires were arranged logically and the responses obtained were analyzed in a tabular form. There were the presentation and the analysis of relevant

responses by the respondents. The bio data of respondents were also taken in respect of their age, sex, qualifications, staff category (i.e. teaching and non-teaching staff), their religious backgrounds and their marital status in which they gave their responses accordingly. According to the bio data, it was observed that most of the students' respondents were Christians and females from Protestant denomination, while non-teaching staff respondents were more than the teaching staff respondents.

RESULTS

The following hypotheses were tested in this study and the results are as follows:

HO₁: Students' involvement in examination malpractices does not significantly affect their moral development in University of Lagos.

T-test was used to test this hypothesis. The result is presented in table 1 below:

Table 1: t-test result on difference between examination malpractice and morality

Variable	N	X	SD	Df	t-Cal	t-Crit
Examination Malpractices	120	22.9	1.99	118	28.70	1.98
Morality	120	35.53	4.45			

$P < 0.05$, $df = 118$, $t\text{-cal.} = 28.70$; $t\text{-crit.} = 1.98$

Table one reveals that the value of t - calculation (28.70) is greater than the value of t. critical which is (1.98) given degree of freedom at (0.05) level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected while accepting the alternative hypothesis which stated that students' involvement in examination malpractices does not significantly affect their moral development.

HO₂: There is no significant difference in the involvement of Muslim and Christian students in examination malpractices.

This hypothesis was tested using the t - test, subjects were categorized into two: Christian and Muslim students' responses on the Effect of Examination Malpractices on Religiosity of Students.

Table 2: t-test result on difference between Muslim and Christian students on examination malpractice

Religion	N	X	SD	Df	t-cal.	t-crit.
Christians	64	22.89	1.94	118	0.05	1.98
Muslims	56	22.91	2.07			

$P < 0.5$; $df = 118$; $t\text{. cal} = 0.05$; $t\text{. crit} = 1.98$

Table 2, reveals that the value of t. calculation is (0.05) which is less than the value

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of t. critical (1.98) given degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which says that there will be no significant difference in the involvement of Christian and Muslim students in examination malpractices is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis which stated that there is significant

difference in the involvement of Christian and Muslim students' in examination malpractices is accepted.

HO₃: There is no significant difference in the involvement of male and female students in examination malpractices.

Table 3: Comparison of Male and Female Students' Involvement in Examination Malpractices

Gender	N	X	SD	Df	t-cal.	t-crit.
Male	57	22.79	2.08	118	0.95	1.98
Female	63	33.14	1.91			

$P < 0.05$; $df = 118$; $t\text{-cal} = 0.95$; $t\text{-crit}, 1.98$

Since t. calculation (0.95) is less than the t. critical (1.98) given 118 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there will be no significant difference- in the involvement of male and female students in examination malpractices is accepted while the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

HO₄: Examination malpractices have no significant effect on the morality of adherents of established churches and Pentecostals.

The t - test statistical was used. In testing this hypothesis, the respondents were grouped into eight denominations and their responses were analyzed and interpreted using t - statistical test.

Table 4: The Effect of Morality on Examination Malpractices

Denomination	N	X	SD
Catholic	17	22.0	2.42
Pentecostal	15	23.33	1.49
Indigenous Churches	3	22.89	2.37
Anser-Udeen	16	22.69	1.53
Anwer-Islam	33	23.25	0.86
Nasfat Islam	7	23.21	1.69
Protestants	29	21.71	2.81

Source of Variation	SS	DF	MS	F. Ratio
Between group	31.25	6	5.21	
Within Group	437.12	113	3.87	1.35
Total	468.37	119		T

T. Critical = 2.17; $df = 6/113$; $P < 0.05$

Since t-calculated (1.35) is less than t-critical (2.17) given 6/113 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is retained while the alternative hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is no significant effect of morality of examination malpractices among adherents of

established churches and Pentecostals.

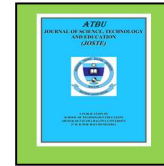
HO₅: There is no significant difference in the perception of the staff of University of Lagos on students' involvement in examination malpractices. The t - test was used to test this hypothesis. The result of

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this analysis is presented in table V below:

Table 5: Comparison of Academic and Non-Academic Staff Perception of Examination Malpractices

Staff	No	X	SD	DF	T. cal	T. crit
Teaching Staff	19	23.56	2.81	38	0.81	2.02
Non-Teaching Staff	21	22.81	3.04			

$P < 0.05$; $df = 38$; $t_{cal} = 0.81$; $T_{critical} = 2.02$

Since t-calculated (0.81) is less than the t-critical (2.02) given 38 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted while the alternative hypothesis was rejected.

In view of the above, the corporate thinking or perception of the entire staff respondents was that examination malpractices have great ugly consequences and therefore, that students should not be involved in them. This could be seen from the result which showed that there is no significant difference in the perception of staff of University of Lagos on students' involvement in examination malpractices. This is so because, from the responses of the staff, majority of them frowned and showed disgust on students' involvement in examination malpractices or fraud.

CONCLUSION

On the premises of the result of findings obtained it could be concluded that was no significant difference between the involvement of male and female, Muslim and Christian student in examination malpractices. The finding further revealed that morality does not play any role in disallowing students from involving in examination malpractices. The perceptions of non-teaching staff and teaching staff are that students should not involve themselves in examination malpractices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings and conclusion in this study, the following recommendations were advanced.

1. **Government:** Government should de-

emphasis the importance of certificate if it wants to curb or eradicate examination malpractices. Government failure: This point houses a lot of things. The government has accusing finger pointing on them when it comes to a case like this. They do not pay good and concrete attention to the students in their countries, though this is exceptional in few countries. The truth remains that the number of governments that fail in their duties are more. How well equipped are the laboratories and mechanical workshops used by the technical students? There should be practical youth empowerment among youth in tertiary institutions for easy understanding. It is important to maintain safety precautions in the workshops during the practical to avoid accidents or injuries. Having these things put in place helps the students to comprehend what they are taught in their individual schools. The heads of many countries overlook their education sector. If the necessary things are put in order by the governments and practical are conducted for the students, they will easily comprehend and put down their important points during their examinations. But a case where government do not provide these things, the students find it difficult to comprehend very well and this pushes them into malpractice.

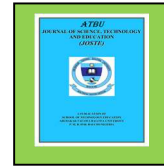
2. **Teachers/Lecturers:** Lecturers do not finish most of the course outlines they have for an academic semester before giving examinations to the students. In some cases, the lecturers even go to the extent of giving examinations to the

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- students even in the areas they did not teach the students for that academic year. Tell me how students will achieve academic excellence in that situation. As a result of this, students are propelled to make their excellent grades either by hook or by crook. The wicked lecturers who do such things at times take the action for the students to fail because many of them do not like the success of their fellow human being.
3. **Examination Bodies:** The National Examination bodies should eradicate examination leakage through intermediaries. This is usually experienced in the country during examination that grants access to students who want admission into tertiary institutions, University Matriculation Examinations (UME). This impure means of securing marks to be admitted into universities or polytechnics makes the students to start messing up in their individual departments when they become finally admitted. It is one of the main reasons why many Nigerian graduates cannot defend themselves. The bad side of this form of malpractice is that those who want to prove that they do not want to engage in malpractice to secure admission into any tertiary institution in the country are being eliminated in admissions because of those that made their marks through “cut-corners”. In other word, examination is no longer the true test of knowledge in countries whose examination supervisors are corrupt.
 4. **Trusted .People:** The people handling and administering examination papers should be people of good characters, stainless and high moral conducts and well-adjusted behaviour in the society.
 5. **Parallel Examinations:** A parallel form of examination for emergencies in case of leakages should be set by examination bodies.
 6. **Enough Invigilators:** Cheating during examination can be minimized by having enough invigilators who are vigilant and through improved sitting arrangements (e.g. interspersing of candidates for different papers or parallel forms of the same paper).
 7. **Detection of Impersonation:** Detection of impersonation during, the examinations may be improved by both comparing examinee's face with his/her passport photograph and reconciling signatures.
 8. **Training of Teacher:** All teachers should be well trained in continuous assessment principles and practices. It has been noted that the rate of failure in examination has been slightly reduced since the reintroduction of continuous assessment (C.A).
 9. **Guidance and Counsellors:** Guidance and counsellors and continuous assessment experts should help students with study skills training, improving self-concepts and reducing debilitating test - anxiety.
 10. **Parents:** Parents to realize the dangers that are inherent in aiding or abetting their children (students) to cheat in examinations, aid the society in fighting the menace of examination malpractices and this will bring sanity in the society, enable students understand the effect of examination malpractices on their moral development and also go a long way in helping the government and the Ministry of Education to tackle the problem of examination malpractices in Nigeria.
 11. **Conscience and Morality:** Conscience and moral behaviour of students should be revived and reawakened through membership of good societies and provision of moral and religious education in our schools.
 12. **School Authorities:** Should always organize orientations, seminars and workshops to imbibe morality and ethical conducts in students.
 13. **The Clerics:** The clergymen in our churches and Mosques should ensure

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that they teach and preach sound ethical messages that touch mostly on good conducts, self-esteem, values and moral behaviour.

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